

STROHM et al  
Serial No. 09/744,159  
May 28, 2003

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**IN THE CLAIMS**

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1- 22 (CANCELED)

23. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) A filter module which defines filtrate filtered and unfiltered material spaces, ~~and which comprises said filter module comprising a~~ separable stack of individual self-contained filter module elements, wherein said filter module elements include:

an individual self-contained ~~a plurality of filter region~~ regions formed of deep bed filter material, and

individual self-contained first and second types of ~~a plurality of~~ draining layers which include a draining layer material disposed between adjacent ones of said filter regions, wherein

(i) said a first type of said draining layers includes a sealing element ~~elements~~ disposed at a side thereof adjacent said unfiltered material space, and flow elements passages disposed at an opposite side thereof adjacent said ~~filtrate filtered material~~ space, and

(ii) said a second type of said draining layers includes said sealing elements ~~element~~ disposed at a side thereof adjacent said ~~filtrate filtered material~~ space, and includes said flow elements passages disposed at an opposite side thereof adjacent said unfiltered material space, wherein

~~said filter regions and said first and second types of draining layers~~ individual self-contained filter module elements are formed into a ~~arranged in said separable stack or in a predetermined order in~~

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~~contact with adjacent other ones of said filter module elements one another without gaps, such that said first and second types of draining layers alternate relative to one another in said stack so that said sealing elements thereof alternately seal the draining layers from said filtrate filtered and unfiltered material spaces, and said flow elements passages thereof alternately establish flow paths between said draining layers and said filtrate filtered and unfiltered material spaces, respectively, and wherein said flow elements of said first and second types of draining layers include openings which allow fluid flow between said filtrate and unfiltered material spaces, respectively, and said draining layer material.~~

24. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said first and second types of draining layers include flow elements for directing flow of material therethrough, and wherein said flow passages include openings ~~include holes~~ formed through a portion of said flow elements.

25. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said first and second types of draining layers include flow elements for directing flow of material therethrough, and wherein said flow passages ~~openings~~ include grooves formed in a portion of said flow elements.

26. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein at least one of said sealing elements and flow elements include connectors for establishing mutual connection between the filter regions ~~region~~ and an adjacent one of the first and/or second types of draining layers in the stack.

27. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein one of said first and second types of draining layers includes clips circumferentially formed along an outer side thereof, and wherein another of said first and second types of draining layers

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includes catch projections circumferentially formed along an outer side thereof and engageable with said clips.

28. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein said sealing and flow elements are formed as an integral self-contained structure with said draining layer material in a leakproof manner.

29. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said sealing and flow elements are joined with and sealed to said draining layer material in a leakproof manner.

30. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region includes first and second filter layers having respective different degrees of separation disposed one on top of another.

31. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region includes first and second filter layers having the same degree of separation disposed one on top of another.

32. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein the filter region is formed of an absorptive filter material.

33. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein the filter region includes filter materials having different absorption properties.

34. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein at least one of said sealing elements and flow elements include connectors for establishing mutual connection between the filter regions and the draining layers in the stack

35. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 34, wherein the connectors protrude from said sealing elements into an adjacent said filter region.

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36. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein the draining layer material includes a plastic nonwoven material.

37. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein the draining layer material is integral with the sealing and flow elements thereof.

38. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 24 or 25, wherein said sealing elements include interconnected projections and clips.

39. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region includes at least one planar filter layer.

40. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 39, wherein each of said first and second types of draining layers is a planar structure.

41. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 23, wherein said filter region comprises a plurality of individual planar filter layers.

42. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 41, wherein at least some of the filter layers are formed of a filter material having the same filtration properties.

43. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 41, wherein all of the filter layers are formed of a filter material having the same filtration properties.

44. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 41, wherein at least some of the filter layers have different filtration properties as compared to others of said filter layers.

45. (NEW) Filter module as claimed in claim 40, wherein flow passages include holes oriented substantially parallel to the plane of the first and second types of draining layers.

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45. (NEW) Filter module as in claim 40, wherein the flow passages include grooves oriented substantially parallel to the plane of the first and second types of draining layers.

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